

treatment resulting in an uneven paying field..

The last article in the book is “Nonperforming Assets of Indian Commercial Banks: An Analytical Exercise” by S. Bardhan and S. Marjit. The authors take a fresh look at the existing official definition of NPAs of Indian commercial banks and then a framework for calculating a tolerable limit of NPAs of the banks, which is worked out under a set of simplified assumptions in a one period case.

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***Manager to CEO: Corporate Wisdom for Survival and Success*** by Walter Vieira. 2005. New Delhi: Response Books. Pp.274, Price Rs. 295.

This book contains management theory and the author shares with the reader how that theory is bent and changed in the real corporate world. The author has dipped into his experiences during a career spanning forty years as a corporate executive, management consultant, and teacher working across Asia, Europe and the Americas. He has relied on narration of real events and situations to illustrate his points which is the age old technique of ‘fable to convey a concept’. This book aims at helping senior managers understand and survive in the present day corporate environment, besides giving a very comprehensive overview of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace with a wide range of issues that senior managers face in organizations as they go up the corporate ladder. The topics discussed in this book include Power, Politick and Work, Self Management, Hiring and Firing, Change Management, Ethics and Human Values, Cooperation and Networking.

The author provides useful tips to handle power in an organization in order to gain greater control of the situation. It is important to understand and use power wisely to become successful. There should be a positive attitude towards power and power is extremely desirable because it gives the authority to get things done, to obtain results. Power also earns the respect and admiration of people around if it is based on ethical methods and not manipulative ones. The important lesson is not to shun power but to aspire for it. Similarly, there is no escape from workplace politics. It is better to accept that company-politics is a stark reality and to mentally prepare to face it and to work with the politics of each situation. Many useful tips are available in the book to handle power and politics in the organization.

Self-management is an imperative pre-requisite to the ability to cultivate all the other managerial traits and be effective and successful in running organizations. Self-

management calls for an innate capacity for sustained introspection combined with the concomitant ability to look within, take stock of one's strengths and weaknesses, and determine one's own emotional and spiritual quotients. The chapter on 'The Art of Self-Management' focuses on the issue of insecurity which cannot be completely ruled out. A proper priority of loyalties will be the first step to build a sense of security. The first loyalty should be to oneself—not in a selfish, overpowering way, but in a manner of investing in oneself through continuing learning, both formal and informal. The second loyalty is to the assignment. Doing justice to the salary received and also doing a little more than that. The third loyalty is to the company, because no one should bite the hand that feeds. And the fourth and last is loyalty to the boss—who surely needs support, advice and assistance. But he cannot be the first loyalty. Many managers put greatest stress on loyalty to the boss. When the boss leaves the company, the subordinates are left orphaned. They seem to have lost their security umbrella!

Some more tips given by the author to minimize insecurity are: development of latent capabilities, reducing expectations from others, measuring one's performance against the goals set. Every manager is a product of his own nature and nurture. Each one is a unique personality. While there is no problem in learning from role models and taking the best from them, imitating them blindly is bad. What is argued here is that one should adopt a style that is natural to one and which ultimately helps one to become a genuine person. This is very important when one moves to a new assignment in another company at a senior level. This brings credibility which is often exposed and identified in small matters and minor accidents. With a small case study, the author proves that inner strength is critical for the ability to lose gracefully. It allows fighting through and accepting losing gracefully, and moving back into the fight and winning the next time. Abraham Lincoln, who lost eight elections before winning the final and most critical one as President of the United States of America, is cited here to illustrate the point of losing gracefully.

The author also provides a scale for a quick self-assessment to test one's psychosocial strengths and deficiencies. On the basis of this one can determine any differences, and plan a strategy to improve oneself. The main reason for unhappiness in people, according to the author, is that they measure their own progress by the achievements of other people. He pleads that people should measure progress by the objectives they have set themselves in life, and how far they have achieved these objectives. It's like the basic rule followed in athletics and racing: 'Always look forward. Keep your eye on the finishing line. If you look back to see where the others are, you may slip up in that brief moment, and lose the race'.

The chapter on cooperation and networking provides more insights on doing business

which is getting more complex every day. As the world increasingly becomes a global village, very few businesses are left unaffected by this development. Competition is no longer local. Most times, it is international. Everyone, however brilliant, has to work with others, build teams, put mind and effort together, and achieve synergy. A beautiful quotation in the book cited from a Chinese proverb reads:

“Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle,  
And the life of the candle will not be shortened.  
Happiness never decreased by being shared.”

The acid-test of today’s CEO will be to identify the best talent, treat this differently, give it cross-functional training, and training in skills required for the next levels and to be perceived as a fair-and-firm top management that is not walled in by the trappings of power and positions. It is also to create a climate wherein employees want to stay and contribute because they can see that there is alignment between their own goals and those of the company.

This book provides insightful learning to senior managers enabling them to cope with work and life which are full of conflicts and competition, besides providing a new perspective on progress, competition, change and many other work-life issues. It gives some realistic recommendations on issues such as teams, hiring and retaining good people, creating and managing change, maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships with bosses and subordinates, career advancement, and ethics, values and failure. It helps the senior manager develop an intuitive power to get the best out of those under his charge and be an inspiration and role-model for them. A person of such endowments also acquires a moral and ethical stature which makes him unassailable as a leader. This book will also be of great help in achieving that ideal balance of being fair and firm; learned yet always learning; judging without being judgemental; developing an iron hand in a velvet glove; and of being compassionate without being weak.

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